

Devotional Reading

Sunday 31st January 2021

VIRACOCHA AND THE COMING OF THE INCAS

THE NATIVES OF THIS LAND affirm that in the beginning, and before this world was created, there was a being called Viracocha. He created a dark world without sun, moon or stars. Owing to this creation he was named Viracocha Pachayachachi, which means "Creator of all things." And when he had created the world, he formed a race of giants of disproportioned greatness painted and sculptured, to see whether it would be well to make real men of that size. He then created men in his likeness as they are now; and they lived in darkness.

Viracocha ordered these people that they should live without quarrelling, and that they should know and serve him. He gave them a certain precept which they were to observe on pain of being confounded if they should break it. They kept this precept for some time, but it is not mentioned what it was. But as there arose among them the vices of pride and covetousness, they transgressed the precept of Viracocha Pachayachachi and falling, through this sin, under his indignation, he confounded and cursed them. Then some were turned into stones, others into other things, some were swallowed up by the earth, others by the sea, and over all there came a general flood which they call *uñu pachacuti*, which means "water that overturns the land." They say that it rained 60 days and nights, that it drowned all created things, and that there alone remained some vestiges of those who were turned into stones, as a memorial of the event, and as an example to posterity, in the edifices of Pucara, which are 60 leagues from Cuzco.¹

TO VIRACOCHA

An Inca prayer

O conquering Viracocha!
Ever-present Viracocha!
Thou who art without equal upon the earth!
Thou who art from the beginnings of the world until its end!
Thou gavest life and valour to men, saying,
"Let this be a man."
And to woman, saying,
"Let this be a woman."
Thou madest them and gavest them being.
Watch over them, that they may live in health and in peace.
Thou who art in the highest heavens,
and among the clouds of the tempest,
grant them long life,
and accept this our sacrifice,
O Creator.²

¹ "History of the Incas" by Pedro Sarmiento De Gamboa, translated by Clements Markham, Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society 1907, pp. 28-58

² "Ancient Civilizations of the Andes" by Philip Ainsworth Means, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931, pp. 437-439